

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-20

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R 141452Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4803

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EC, CI

SUBJECT: REACTION TO CHILEAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: QUITO 4771

1. SUMMARY: EVENTS SURROUNDING OVERTHROW OF ALLENDE HAVE RECEIVED WIDESPREAD MEDIA COVERAGE HERE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME DEMONSTRATIONS IN BOTH GUAYAQUIL AND QUITO. GENERAL PUBLIC REACTION APPEARS TO BE COMBINATION OF RESIGNATION TO WHAT, WITH BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, WAS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BECOME INEVITABLE, AND GENUINE SORROW OVER PASSING OF A HIGHLY RESPECTED AND ADMIRERED LATIN AMERICAN LEADER. GOE HAS ISSUED A PROCLAMATION DEPLORING ALLENDE'S DEATH BUT NOT YET INDICATED ITS POSTURE TOWARDS THE NEW CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

2. OVERTHROW AND DEATH OF ALLENDE AND SURROUNDING EVENTS HAVE ACHIEVED WIDESPREAD MEDIA COVERAGE HERE. COVERAGE HAS BEEN ALMOST UNIVERSALLY SYMPATHETIC TO ALLENDE, LAMENTING THE PASSING OF A MAN CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN REAL "MACHO" AND RECALLING WITH SOME SENTIMENT HIS VISIT HERE IN AUGUST OF 1971.

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3. MANY POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS HAVE FELT COMPELLED TO

ISSUE STATEMENTS REGARDING CHILEAN DEVELOPMENTS. STRONGEST DENUNCIATION HAS COME FROM HAVANA-ORIENTED BRANCH OF ECUADOREAN COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH DECRIES COWARDLY "ASSASSINATION" BY "IMPERIALISM, REACTIONARY FASCISTS AND CHILEAN GORILLAS." OTHER POLITICAL PARTY COMMENT HAS BEEN MORE TEMPERATE, ALTHOUGH NONE HAS PUBLICLY APPLAUDED DEVELOPMENTS. PRIVATELY, INFORMED OPINION HERE SEEMS MUCH MORE DIVIDED ON THE MERITS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED THAN MIGHT BE ASSUMED FROM PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

4. GOE, IN NAME OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ, HAS PUBLISHED PROCLAMATION IN ALL NATIONAL PAPERS DEPLORING DEATH OF ALLENDE AND PRAISING WHAT IT CHARACTERIZES AS HIS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN CHILEAN-ECUADOREAN FRIENDSHIP. THERE IS AS YET NO INDICATION WHAT OFFICIAL GOE ATTITUDE WILL BE TOWARDS NEW CHILEAN LEADERSHIP.

5. DESPITE ABOVE-DESCRIBED GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF INDIGNATION AND REMORSE, COMMENTARY ON IMPLICATIONS OF ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS HAS BEEN MORE GUARDED. AMONG THE MORE FREQUENT THEMES HEARD IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS ARE THAT ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW HAD BECOME INEVITABLE, THAT HE HAD BEEN DRAGGED INTO AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION BY HIS OWN EXTREME LEFT AND THAT, ALL IN ALL, HIS FATE IS A GOOD LESSON FOR OTHERS IN LATIN AMERICA WHO MIGHT WISH TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, A NUMBER OF CONTACTS HAVE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT CHILE CAN REBOUND RAPIDLY FROM THE ECONOMIC ILLS WHICH ALLENDE'S RULE HAD BROUGHT AND A NUMBER HAVE MENTIONED WHAT THEY VIEW AS A NEED FOR A U.S. "MARSHALL PLAN" TO GET CHILE BACK ON ITS FEET. ANOTHER THEME IS THAT ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EXTREME LEFT THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA, PRESAGING AN END TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACEFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND A GREATER RESORT TO VIOLENCE.

6. NEWS OF THE COUP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SOME AGITATION AND VIOLENCE. IN ADDITION TO EVENTS IN GUAYAQUIL (REPORTED REFTEL), SMALL GROUP OF CHILEAN EXILES STAGED

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DEMONSTRATION IN QUITO ON SEPTEMBER 11, APPLAUDING ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW AND PROVOKING COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION BY LOCAL UNIVERSITY ELEMENTS. THERE WERE ALSO THREE BOMB INCIDENTS ON THAT SAME AFTERNOON, TWO OUTSIDE THE OFFICES OF THE CHILEAN NATIONAL AIRLINE AND ONE NEAR THE RESIDENCE OF A CHILEAN EXILE. SITUATION HAS CALMED NOW BUT AUTHORITIES REMAIN ALERT TO POSSIBILITY OF OTHER FLASH OCCURRENCES.

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